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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether subjective organizational ability and the organization of materials influence reading comprehension for one good and two groups of poor readers. The subjects were 200 freshmen classified as good readers with (average or above average reading comprehension), difference poor readers (with average or above vocabulary but below average reading comprehension), and deficit poor readers (with below average reading comprehension and vocabulary). Within each group, readers were classified as either high or low subjective organizers and given either a well organized or poorly organized passage to read. After reading the passage, subjects were given a reading comprehension test composed of fact items and inference items. The major findings was that when subjective organizational ability was combined with reading ability, additional information was provided about the performance of difference poor readers. Difference poor readers who were low subjective organizers did not perform significantly higher than did deficit poor readers who were low subjective organizers. Difference poor readers who were high subjective organizers did score significantly higher on total reading comprehension than did deficit poor readers who were high subjective organizers. (WR)

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The Effects of Subjective Organizational Ability And The Organization of Materials on Reading Comprehension: An Information Processing Interpretation

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Freshmen (N=200) classified as good (average or above reading comprehension) Difference Poor (below average reading comprehension, average but average or above vocabulary), and Deficit Poor Readers (below average vocabulary and reading comprehension), were also divided into high and low subjective organizers. Using a 3 x 2 x 2 ANOVA design, reading groups by subjective organizational ability by passage organizations were analyzed for three dependent variables (total comprehension, Fact, inference scores) in separate univariate designs. Subjective organization interacted with reading ability groups only on inference items. The findings were interpreted as supporting a proposed model of reading for comprehension as an information processing activity.

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not subjective organizational ability and the organization of materials influence reading comprehension for good and two groups of poor readers, Difference and Deficit. Another purpose was to examine which test items, fact or inference, are affected by passage organization and subjective organizational ability. Subjective organization was measured by Bousfield and Bousfield's (1966) of intertrial repetition (ITR).

The subjects (N=200) were freshmen classified as good readers (average or above reading comprehension), Difference Poor Readers (average or above vocabulary but below average reading comprehension), and Deficit Poor Readers (below average reading comprehension and vocabulary). Within each group, readers were classified as either a high or low subjective organizer and given either a well organized or poorly organized passage to read. After reading the passage, subjects were given a reading comprehension test composed of fact items (recalling information directly from the passage) and inference items (making a deduction from information not included directly in the passage).

The general hypothesis, derived from Cromer's (1970) conceptualization of Difference Poor Readers and a proposed model of reading comprehension as an information processing activity, was that there would be a three-way interaction.

A 3 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance design was used to analyze reading groups by subjective organizational ability by passage organization; each dependent variable (total reading comprehension score, fact score, inference score) was examined in separate univariate analyses.

The major finding was that when subjective organizational ability was combined with reading ability additional information was provided about the performance of Difference Poor Readers. Difference Poor Readers who were low subjective organizers did not perform significantly higher than Deficit Poor Readers who were low subjective organizers. But Difference Poor Readers who were high subjective organizers did score significantly higher on total reading comprehension than Deficit Poor Readers who were high subjective organizers. When the total comprehension score was analyzed by fact and inference scores, inference items were the source of the interaction. No interaction was found between reading ability groups and subjective organizational ability on the fact items.

The results were interpreted within an information processing model of reading for comprehension. Subjective organizational ability was described as one of the many internal organizational processes which enabled readers to transform surface structures into more abstract deep structures, stored and retrieved from memory. The results have implications for future research on organizational processes that may influence reading comprehension and support the position that readers use organizational processes in learning as well as reading for comprehension.

Bousfield, A. K., & Bousfield, W. A. Measurement of clustering and of sequential constancies in repeated free recall. Psychological Reports, 1966, 19, 935-942.

Cromer, W. The Difference model: A new explanation for some reading difficulties. Journal of Educational Psychology, 1970, 61, 471-483.

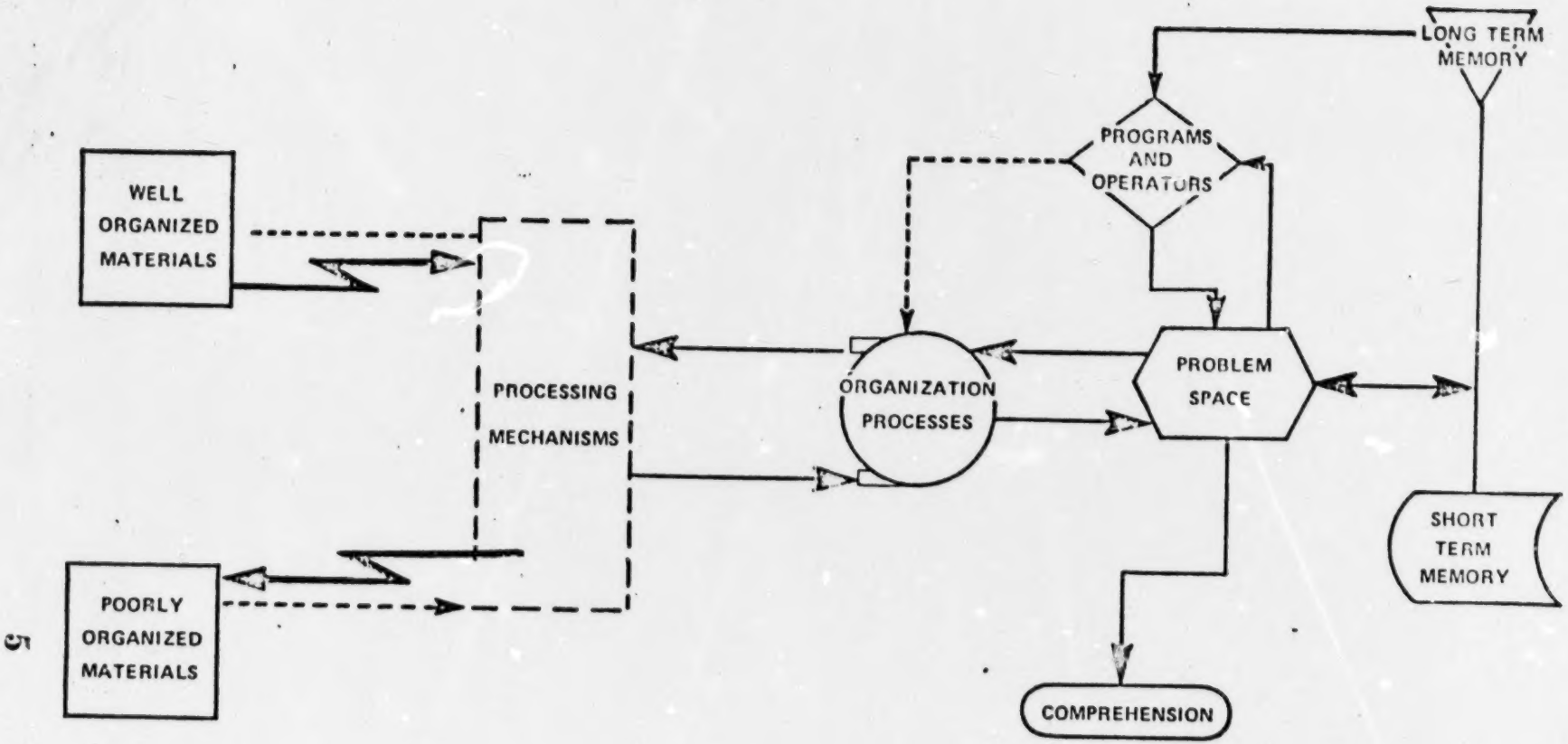

FIGURE 1

AN INFORMATION PROCESSING MODEL OF THE SYSTEMS INFLUENCING READING COMPREHENSION